GO While ramp meters aren't a cure all for the crowds of vehicles jamming the roadways, they have proven to be a cost-effective strategy for reducing accidents and travel times for long-distance commuters. In general, ramp meters are located on our busiest freeways - Interstate 5, State Route 520, Interstate 90, Interstate 405 and State Route 167. Typically, ramps are metered from 6 to 9 a.m. and from 3 to 7 p.m. This varies, depending on the level of traffic congestion.

INTERSTATE 405

Ramp meters

High Tech Freeways

Ramp meters are part of a large computer-operated network that is centralized in WSDOT's Traffic Systems Management Center (TSMC). Throughout the Puget Sound area, magnetic "loops" are embedded in the pavement that provide TSMC with information about traffic flow, such as the volume and speed of vehicles on freeways and ramps. These traffic data are continually fed to the ramp meters, which automatically alter their cycles to maximize traffic flow on both the ramps and the freeways.

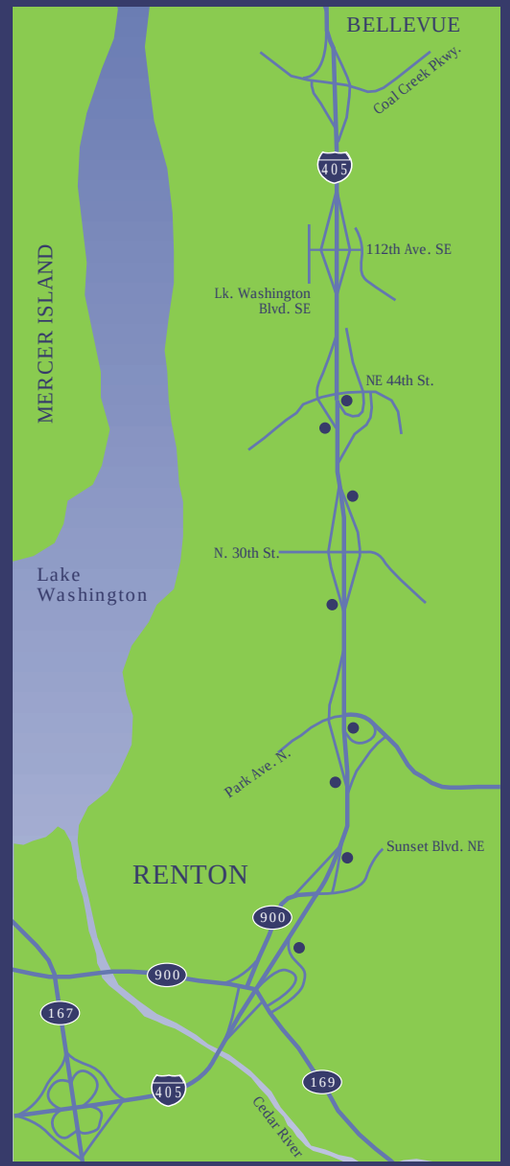
Ramp meters are one of the most cost effective ways WSDOT has to efficiently operate freeways. They look like traffic signals and are placed at freeway entrance ramps. Most allow only one vehicle through each green light, creating a 4-15 second delay between cars entering the highway. This delay helps reduce disruptions to mainline traffic, and more importantly, it reduces accidents at merge points.

Our staff would be happy to answer other questions you may have. You may reach us at 206-440-4790. The recorded phone line will ask you to leave a message to which our staff will promptly respond. Another source of information is our Internet homepage at http://www.wsdot.wa.gov.

GO **Starting in July**, those who drive on Interstate 405 in Renton will notice ramp meters being activated in six new locations. The locations are indicated on the map to the right. The meters will be activated during peak traffic times (commute times and other times as necessary), so they can do their job to help traffic flow more smoothly through the corridor.

The newly activated ramp meters are at the following locations in the Renton area:

GO WITH THE FLOW



in Shoreline. Operators staffing the center watch ramp traffic through closed circuit television cameras, and can override the computer system at any time to manually set ramp meter rates.

Q. Why do some ramps have diamond lanes and others don't? And are people driving in the diamond lanes required to stop?

A. The diamond lanes on the ramps are called high-occupancy-vehicle (HOV) bypass lanes, and are reserved for use by carpools and transit. People driving in that lane do not have to stop at the ramp meter—one more reason to share the ride with others.

HOV bypass lanes are built on ramps that have room to accommodate them.

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go with the flow

Ramp meters

TIPS

To Make Your Trip Faster

1. Pull up to the "stop bar": pull your vehicle up to the white line (stop bar) to trigger the ramp meter.

2. Use both lanes: if there are two unrestricted lanes on the ramp, use them both to improve traffic flow.

3. Give it time: it takes time for motorists to adjust to traffic changes; ramp queues may be unusually long at first. WSDOT will adjust the timing of the meters as conditions change.

Visit our web site at: WWW. WSDOT.WA.GOV

GO WITH THE FLOW

INTERSTATE 405

RAMP METERS

coming soon

Washington State Department of Transportation

RAMP METERS Q&A

Common Questions About Ramp Meters

Q: Will all ramps be metered?

A: No, not all. When deciding what locations ramp meters provide the most benefits to traffic, WSDOT's engineers analyze each ramp's volumes, the physical layout of the ramps and mainline traffic volumes. Some ramps have too many cars on them to reasonably meter traffic.

Q: Won't traffic waiting at the meters back up traffic on city streets?

A: What's nice about ramp meters is that they respond to actual traffic conditions. They link computers with magnetic sensors embedded in the ramps and on the freeways near the ramps. These sensors use magnetic fields to detect cars. This information is fed to a central computer, which in turn adjusts the rate at which meters operate. If cars start to back up onto the ramp, the ramp meter automatically speeds up to clear the queue. If traffic is light on the highway, the meter also speeds up to allow more cars to merge. If traffic is heavy everywhere, which is often the case during peak hours, the computer attempts to balance the needs of all. Ramp meters will not eliminate congestion, but they will help smooth traffic flow. Ramp meters are monitored remotely by traffic specialists in our Traffic Systems Management Center